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God Speaks to His People

IN FOCUS: *God loves us enough to speak to us.*

SCRIPTURE: *Exodus 3:1-6,11-15; 4:28-31*



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

LOOK AT OUR WORLD

Many people who believe in the existence of God assume God is distant and uninvolved in our day-to-day lives. Even Christians can fall prey to this when we think our prayers are unheard and unanswered. But God does care, and in His timing, He reaches out to us with a plan that calls for us to walk with Him.

**When have you been able to reconnect with someone from your past?
How was the conversation initiated?**

- ▶ Love must be expressed, and though we're used to visible and audible responses from people, God still communicates His love even though we can't physically see or hear Him.
- ▶ God takes the initiative to speak to us and show His love by calling us into relationship with Him.

BONUS: *Have you ever felt like God was trying to get your attention?
What happened? (PSG, p. 2)*

For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at biblestudiesforlife.com/adults.

1. EXODUS 3:1-6

God initiates the conversation with us.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud Exodus 3:1-6. Then use the Key Words to highlight and explain the significant themes and terms found in the passage.

KEY WORDS

- A Midian (v. 1)**—After Sarah’s death, Abraham married Keturah, and one of their sons, Midian, was sent east by Moses (Gen. 25:6). The Midianites eventually settled in present-day western Saudi Arabia (1 Chron. 1:32-33).
- B Horeb (v. 1)**—Horeb means “desolate” in Hebrew. Tradition places it in southern Sinai—seen as a lower summit of Mount Sinai.
- C Flame of fire (v. 2)**—The first fire experience in the Exodus story; God later led His people as a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22; 14:24) and revealed His presence in the tabernacle as a flaming fire (Num. 9:15–16). Fire also marked the presence of the Holy Spirit and His heavenly presence (Acts 2:3-4; Rev. 15:2).
- D Remove the sandals (CSB); put off thy shoes (KJV) (v. 5)**—Walking exposed one’s sandals to dirt and impurity, rendering them ritually unclean and therefore unfit for God’s holy presence—which had sanctified the ground (see Josh. 5:15; Acts 7:33).
- E Afraid (v. 6)**—Moses hid his face in awe, reverence, or godly fear—humbled by God’s holy presence.

Why was the burning bush a perfect means for God to get Moses’s attention? Do you see any significance in the use of fire or the fact that the bush burned but was not consumed?

- ▶ Many times in the Bible, miracles accompany a message from God. God did this for Moses through the burning bush. They serve to get our attention, validate that God is speaking to us, and show God taking the initiative to speak to us.
- ▶ Fire is closely associated with God’s presence in the Bible. He led the Israelites with a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21), answered Elijah’s prayer with fire in his battle with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:38), and even described Himself as a fire (Deut. 4:24).
- ▶ Just as fire revealed God’s presence and power, we can trust His refining work to strengthen us for faithful living.

How has God gotten your attention in the past? When has God clearly communicated a specific message to you?

BONUS: How might God be trying to get your attention today? (PSG, p. 4)

2. EXODUS 3:11-15

We must acknowledge God’s voice.

Direct someone to read aloud Exodus 3:11-15. Use the Key Words to frame your discussion.

KEY WORDS

- F Pharaoh (v. 11)**—Exodus does not identify the pharaoh. Many scholars believe this is because Egyptians viewed the pharaoh as divine. Exodus highlights the one true God.
- G What is his name? (v. 13)**—Names reflected essence or character; knowing a name implied relationship
- H I AM WHO I AM (CSB); I AM THAT I AM (KJV) (v. 14)**—God revealed His name to Moses. “I AM” translates Yahweh—God’s covenant name, which means self-existent, unchanging. Latin translates Yahweh as “Jehovah.”

What does God’s name reveal about Him? How does His name verify His identity? Why would God link His name to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

- ▶ God’s name, “I AM WHO I AM” (CSB); “I AM THAT I AM” (KJV), is rooted in the Hebrew word that means “to be.” It hints at God’s eternal presence and is intentionally vague to show God’s incomparable nature, His “otherness.”
- ▶ Though Moses was Hebrew, he was an outsider to the Israelites. He needed a way to validate God’s message and God’s choice to call Moses as their leader. God’s name was familiar to the Israelites, known by their ancestors, and affirmed His authority.

DIG DEEPER: Use the information on Mt. Sinai on page 4 to further enhance the discussion of Moses’s encounters with God.

How can believers distinguish God’s voice from other voices?

- ▶ Sheep know their shepherd's voice (John 10:27); believers learn to hear God through prayer, Scripture, and obedience. His voice always reflects His character—never contradicting the Bible, always guiding toward truth.
- ▶ Encourage daily time in the Word and prayer.

How does it make you feel to know the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob wants to speak to you?

- ▶ The fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob desires to speak to us personally shows His deep love and ongoing faithfulness.
- ▶ From Genesis to Revelation, God speaks to us. Knowing He still guides us should bring us awe and comfort.

BONUS: Moses questioned his worthiness to speak for God. What does God's response ("I will certainly be with you") reveal about His love and presence? What does this tell us about His character and His desire to be known? (PSG, p. 6)

3. EXODUS 4:28-31

We must respond to what God says to us.

Read and guide the group through Exodus 4:28-31, using the Key Words as touchpoints for reflection and application.

KEY WORDS

- I Aaron (v. 28)**—Moses's brother (Ex. 6:20), who would later serve as the Hebrews' first high priest; his descendants would follow him in this role. John the Baptist's parents were both from the lineage of Aaron (1 Chron. 24:1,10,19; Luke 1:5).
- J Signs (vv. 28,30)**—Plagues; supernatural occurrences that gave evidence of God's divine presence and power
- K They knelt low (CSB); they bowed their heads (KJV) (v. 31)**—An act of humility and a way to show deference and honor to a high-ranking person (Gen. 43:28) or a king (1 Kings 1:16)

How did Moses respond to God's message to him? How did the people respond when they heard God's message? What do these two different responses have in common?

- ▶ Moses's reluctance in Exodus 3 changed to obedience. He and Aaron went to the Israelites and obediently conveyed God's message of concern and deliverance to the people.

- ▶ Overwhelmed by God's compassionate plan, the people humbled themselves and worshiped. Whenever God speaks, it's a call to obey Him and worship Him.

BONUS IDEA: Consider incorporating the idea on page 4 to expand your study on responding to God's message.

When have you sensed God calling you to something but hesitated to obey? When has God's Word humbled you?

- ▶ Emphasize that God's voice will never contradict Scripture.
- ▶ God's voice leads to obedience and transformation. It often calls us to trust, surrender, or act in faith (Jas. 1:22; Rom. 12:2).

BONUS: What impact did God's message have on the people of Israel? How does this show that God speaks to comfort and encourage His people? (PSG, p. 9)

LIVE IT OUT

How has God been speaking to you recently about a particular issue or area of your life? What steps of obedience is God asking you to take?

- ▶ **Start with gratitude.** Thank God for speaking and guiding you, even in small ways. His voice is evidence of His love for us.
- ▶ **Share and seek wisdom.** Consider discussing what you sense God is saying with a trusted friend or mentor. God often confirms His voice through the counsel of others in the body of Christ.
- ▶ **Respond with purpose.** If God is revealing a specific plan or calling, worship Him and commit to obedience. This may mean making a decision, surrendering fear, or stepping into a new area of service or leadership.

PRAY & REMEMBER

Lord, thank You for Your promise in Exodus 3:12 that You are with me and desire for me to know and follow You. Please reveal Your will to me and help me trust Your guidance.

BONUS IDEAS

This optional activity is an object lesson, and it supports Exodus 4:28-31: We must respond to what God says to us.

This activity shows that there are some forms of communication that demand a response. This is especially true when God takes the initiative to speak to us. His words not only show His love for us, but also His plan for our lives.

Materials Needed:

- You'll need a phone that has the ability to play different ringtones.

PRIOR TO THE SESSION, listen to the ringtones on your phone. Be prepared to play a ringtone during the session that communicates urgency (like a siren or something similar).

DISPLAY your phone and say: *Phones do more than make calls—they wake us up, remind us of tasks, and alert us to urgent messages. Many people use their phone as an alarm clock to wake them up in the morning. It's easy to program an alarm and you can choose what type of ringtone you want to hear.*

PLAY the two different ringtones and discuss which ringtone each person would prefer. Ask if they hit the snooze button in the morning. State: *Regardless if the ringtone was set to wake us up or remind us of a task during the day, the purpose of the ringtone is to elicit a response. It reminds us to do something.*

CONCLUDE the activity by saying, *When God speaks to us, hitting the snooze button isn't a viable option. His communication with us is designed to elicit a response. We must respond with obedience and act on what God has said.*

DIG DEEPER

Covering almost 24,000 square miles, the Sinai Peninsula is a triangular-shaped, southward-pointing land mass that connects the northeast corner of Egypt with southwest Asia. The Mediterranean Sea is to the north; the Gulf of Suez is in the west, and the Gulf of Aqaba is in the east. The peninsula is part of Egypt today. Its name is derived from Mount Sinai in Scripture.

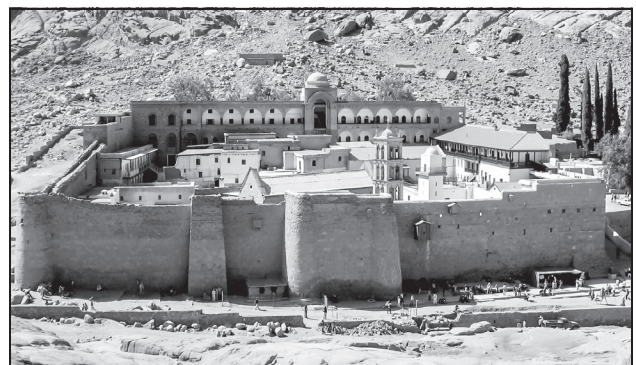
The difficulty is that no one knows exactly where the particular mountain is located. One mountain in the southern end of the peninsula, though, has been identified as Mount Sinai since the fourth century AD. According to the book of Exodus, Moses ascended and descended Mount Sinai seven times¹ during the Israelites' encampment at its base. These repeated journeys underscore the mountain's spiritual significance and the intensity of Moses's communion with God.



Mount Sinai in Egypt

After Rome's Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, he and his mother, Helena, set out in AD 326/327 to identify the location of events recorded in Scripture. One site they wanted to pinpoint was Mount Sinai.

Numerous churches and monasteries located in the southern part of the peninsula seemed to indicate the ancient Israelites had traveled through and maybe camped in the area. The ancient historian, Eutychus of Alexandria, recorded that Helena visited monks at a particular location in this region. (Some scholars believe that due to her advanced age, Helena sent servants to this region rather than traveling there herself). The monks identified this as the site where Moses received the tablets of stone. Of the granite mountains in this region, one rises to almost 7,500 feet. It goes by the name of "Jebel Musa," which translates as "Mountain of Moses."



Aerial view of the Monastery of St. Catherine, the oldest Christian Monastery located on the slopes of Mount Sinai, Sinai Peninsula in Egypt

At the foot of Jebel Musa is Saint Catherine's Monastery, which was constructed in the mid-500s AD. It is the oldest continually inhabited and active monastery in the world. Saint Catherine's is enclosed by gray granite walls that measure 280 by 250 feet, about 34 feet high, and 6 feet thick. The monastery houses one of the world's finest collections of ancient biblical texts plus religious artwork and iconography. For centuries the monks living in the monastery have tended to what is, according to tradition, the burning bush from which God spoke to Moses.

Moses's recorded ascents and descents of Mount Sinai: (1) Exodus 19:3-7; (2) 19:8-14; (3) 19:20-25; (4) 20:21-24:3; (5) 24:13-32:15; (6) 32:31-34; (7) 34:4-29.